

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-20 OMB-01 EB-08 TRSE-00 /112 W
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P 041230Z APR 78
FM AMCONSUL HALIFAX
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2100
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 HALIFAX 0168

E O 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT CA
SUBJECT: MINISTERIAL RUMBLINGS IN NEWFOUNDLAND

1. AS NFLD PREMIER FRANK MOORES VACATIONED IN THE BAHAMAS, UNHAPPY MEMBERS OF HIS GOVT REPORTEDLY CAUCUSED PRIVATELY ON MAR 23 TO DISCUSS DIFFERENT "CONCERNS" THEY HAVE WITH REGARD TO GOVT POLICY. PUBLIC REACTION HAS BEEN PREDICTABLY ADVERSE TO THE TOUGH NEW BELT-TIGHTENING MEASURES IN THE RECENT BUDGET AND MHA'S ARE GETTING A LOT OF FLAK FROM THEIR CONSTITUENTS. BUT MHA'S ON THE GOVT SIDE OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT MORE THAN GRASSROOTS COMPLAINTS. SEVERAL OF THEM ARE SAID TO BE AGGRIEVED OVER THE DISTRIBUTION OF JOBS AND PORTFOLIOS--SOME BECAUSE THEY HAVE TOO MUCH ON THEIR PLATES AND OTHERS BECAUSE THEY HAVE EITHER TOO LITTLE OR NOTHING AT ALL.

2. WHEN RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER JOHN LUNDRIGAN RESIGNED HIS PORTFOLIOS TO PROTEST THE GOVT'S FAILURE TO ALLOCATE FUNDS FOR HOSPITAL EXPANSION IN HIS RIDING (HALIFAX 0152), HIS RURAL DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO WAS GIVEN TO BRIAN PECKFORD (ALREADY MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY) AND HIS PUBLIC WORKS PORTFOLIO TO
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BILL DOODY (ALREADY PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, MINISTER FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS, AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE). PECKFORD S MINES AND ENERGY PORTFOLIO IS A HEAVY ONE AND DOODY HAD ALREADY SLOUGHED OFF THE FINANCE PORTFOLIO BECAUSE HE WAS OVERBURDENED. (THE PREMIER,

INCIDENTALLY, THEN GAVE THE FINANCE PORTFOLIO TO JUSTICE MINISTER ALEX HICKMAN AS AN ADDED RESPONSIBILITY.)

3. AS PORTFOLIOS HAVE HOPSCOTCHED IN RECENT WEEKS AMONG INCUMBENT CABINET MEMBERS, YOUNG AND AMBITIOUS MHA'S SUCH AS NEIL WINDSOR, MOORES' PARLIAMENTARY ASST, JOE GOUDIE, ONE OF MOORES' SPECIAL ASSTS, AND CHARLIE POWER, PRESIDENT OF THE PROVINCIAL PC ASSN, ARE REPORTEDLY EACH MIFFED AT HAVING BEEN PASSED OVER FOR PROMOTION. WINDSOR IS SAID TO HAVE WRITTEN A RESIGNATION LETTER WHICH HE LATER DESTROYED, BUT HE DENIES THE REPORT.

4. FISHERIES MINISTER WALTER CARTER AND TOURISM MINISTER JAMES MORGAN ARE UNHAPPY TOO. CARTER OPPOSES THE PROVINCIAL POLICY WHICH FAVORS THE SALE OF 51 PERCENT OF THE OCEAN HARVESTERS FISH PROCESSING COMPANY TO THE WEST GERMAN UNILEVER SUBSIDIARY NORDSEE. NOT THAT CARTER OPPOSES THE SALE: FAR FROM IT. WHAT CARTER NOW SAYS HE OPPOSES IS ALLOWING A FOREIGN COMPANY TO HAVE CONTROLLING INTEREST IN A NFLD FISH PROCESSING COMPANY. HIS PLAN IS TO REVISE THE PROPOSED DEAL TO ALLOW THE PROVINCIAL GOVT A 5 PERCENT INTEREST IN THE COMPANY. UNDER HIS PLAN, NORDSEE WOULD CONTROL 48 PERCENT, OCEAN HARVESTERS 47 PERCENT, AND THE GOVT 5 PERCENT. AND ALTHOUGH CARTER HAS NOT COME RIGHT OUT AND THREATENED RESIGNATION IF HIS

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PROPOSAL IS NOT ACCEPTED, HE HAS THREATENED "TROUBLE" AND HAS SAID HE WOULD BE FORCED TO MAKE A "DECISION" IN THAT EVENT.

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5 MORGAN'S DISCONTENT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS PRESENT TOURISM PORTFOLIO BUT RELATES TO HIS FORMER TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO WHICH WAS RECENTLY TRANSFERRED TO BILL DOODY. SOON AFTER DOODY WAS GIVEN THE TRANSPORTATION JOB, THE CABINET INDICATED IT WAS ABOUT READY TO ACCEPT THE 50-50 COST SHARING ARRANGEMENT FOR HIGHWAYS CONSTRUCTION WITH OTTAWA -- A DEAL MORGAN HAD FOUGHT BITTERLY AND LONG AGAINST. DOODY HAS INDICATED THAT THE DECISION OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES TO GO ALONG WITH THE 50-50 DEAL GAVE NFLD LITTLE ROOM FOR MANEUVER AND THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE DEAL WAS VIRTUALLY FORCED UPON THE PROVINCE, BUT MORGAN DOES NOT ACCEPT THIS RATIONALE AND IS REPORTEDLY THINKING ABOUT LEAVING THE CABINET.

6. COMMENT: FRANK MOORES IS A STRONG, SELF-WILLED MAN WHO, IN TRUE NFLD TRADITION, RUNS HIS GOVT PRETTY MUCH AS A PERSONAL FIEFDOM. WHEN HIS IS AWAY, SUBMERGED GRIEVANCES HAVE A WAY OF SURFACING IN THE PRESS, BUT UPON HIS RETURN MOST OF THE AGGRIEVED WILL PROBABLY BECOME PRETTY QUIET. ORGANIZATIONALLY, HIS GOVT IS IN A BIT OF A SHAMBLES. THIS, HOWEVER, DOES NOT IMMEDIATELY THREATEN ITS CONTINUANCE. BILL ROWE, THE LIBERAL OPPOSITION LEADER, IS NEW IN OFFICE AND IS REALLY NOT MUCH OF AN OPPONENT THUS FAR. SOME PEOPLE, INDEED, ARE ALREADY TAGGING
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ROWE WITH THE TITLE THOMAS DEWEY FOUND SO DAMAGING TO HIS IMAGE BUT WAS UNABLE TO SHAKE OFF: THE LITTLE MAN ON THE WEDDING CAKE. OTHERS ARE HARKING BACK TO THE DAYS WHEN ROWE WAS THE MINISTER IN JOEY SMALLWOOD'S GOVT CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE UNPOPULAR RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM. ROWE'S IMMEDIATE JOB, THEN, IS TO CONVINCE PEOPLE SOMEHOW THAT HE IS NEITHER A HANDSOME LIGHTWEIGHT NOR YET A RECYCLED SMALLWOOD STOOGUE, BUT A HARD-CHARGING AND RESPONSIBLE POLITICIAN WHO CAN OFFER NEWFOUNDLANDERS A CLEAR ALTERNATIVE. IT WILL BE AN UPHILL JOB TO DO THIS. MEANWHILE, WITH PROBABLY NO ELECTIONS COMING BEFORE 1979, MOORES IS CERTAINLY NOT IN MUCH TROUBLE.
END COMMENT.

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